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## Miss. partnership missions spotlighted

By Carl M. White  
Associate Editor

Mississippi Baptists, along with Baptists from Honduras, Maryland/Delaware, and Ukraine, gathered Nov. 12-13 at First Church, Jackson, to celebrate a year of partnership mission work and to prepare for the future.

Reports and testimonies of the work carried on by Baptists in the three partnerships were delivered. Plans for next year's mission opportunities were discussed and training offered for those interested in participating.

Thomas and June Nolen of Mantee, on-site coordinators for the Ukrainian partnership, asked that Mississippi pray that they "stay focused on God and his plan for Odessa."

The Nolens went to Ukraine in February to serve as International Service Corps volunteers for the Southern Baptist International

Hurricane Mitch.

"In many (houses), as we drove the last nails the people were moving in," Archie Crawford said.

Virginia Crawford thanked Mississippi Baptists for being part of how God met the needs of the people so deeply affected by the hurricane.

Paul Harrell, director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Partnership Missions Department, reported that during the past year

11 Maryland/Delaware associations had formed links with 16 Mississippi associations. There have been 42 projects, with 390 volunteers involved.

Harrell said in Honduras there have been 13 construction teams and 15 medical/dental teams, with over 700 volunteers. They recorded 4,975 professions of faith.

Harrell indicated that eight teams had gone to Ukraine, involving 82 volunteers. They distributed 1,000 Bibles and saw 113 professions of faith.

Harrell said the goals for the year 2000 include: starting nine new churches in Odessa; 10 new churches in Maryland/Delaware; and 15 new churches in Honduras.

Harrell also hopes to see 50 teams going to Maryland/Delaware, 60 teams to



SPANISH PRAISE — Singing a praise song in Spanish for the Partnership Missions Celebration Banquet Nov. 12 at First Church, Jackson, were (from left) Alberto Herrera of Honduras; Jane and Jim Baldwin, fieldside coordinators for Mississippi Baptist Partnership Missions in Honduras; and Gary Smith of McAllen, Tex. (Photo by Carl M. White)



TRANSLATING — Gary Smith (left) of McAllen, Tex. translates for Honduran pastor Armendo Mega during the Partnership Mission Celebration banquet Nov. 12 at First Church, Jackson. (Photo by Carl M. White)

Mission Board in Odessa.

"There are opportunities to build churches. Of the 104 churches in the Odessa oblast (region), 30 have no buildings," June Nolen said.

She told of a woman who works in the secure area where they park their van.

"I said, 'I'm going to give her a Bible.' So I offered it to her. Her name is

Sonya, and she started crying. She said, 'I've never owned a Bible.'"

Later Sonya told June Nolen that she washes her hands every time before she picks up her Bible to read it.

"God is very much at work in Ukraine," Nolen said.

Ken Cavey, director of the partnership work for Maryland/Delaware Baptists, reminded Mississippi Baptists that "our work is great."

"You can minister at a Head Start, or in a community where the cheapest house cost \$800,000," he said.

"We are grateful that at such a strategic time Mississippi Baptists have come to join us. In Baltimore city, there are more than 875,000 people, 98% of whom have never darkened the door of a church," Cavey said.

Archie and Virginia Crawford, fieldside coordinators for the La Ceibia, Honduras, partnership, said thus far 128 homes have been built in the area devastated by

Honduras, and 20 teams to Ukraine.

In addition, Harrell said Mississippi Baptists will add the Impact Northeast partnership in the year 2000.

Impact Northeast is a joint effort of six Southern Baptist state conventions to plant churches in six Northeastern states where 25% of the population of the U. S. resides, Harrell said.

Also, Mississippi will join with the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board in the Strategic Cities emphasis. Mississippi Baptists' focus city will be Boston.

For more information on partnership missions, contact Harrell at P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 292-3398, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651. E-mail: pharrell@mbcb.org.

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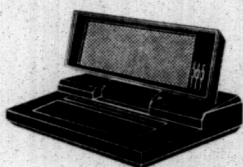
### Ukraine partnership projects for 2000

DATE	PURPOSE	DATE	PURPOSE
March 24-April 4	New church start	Aug. 4-15	Women's Conf.
April 7-18	New church start	Aug. 18-27	Construction
April 21-May 2	New church start	Sept. 1-12	New church start
May 19-30	New church start	Sept. 15-26	New church start
June 2-13	New church start	Sept. 29-Oct. 10	New church start
June 16-25	Construction	Oct. 13-22	Medical/dental team
July 7-16	Pastor's conf.	To be announced	3 professors to teach at Odessa Seminary
July 14-July 25	New church start	To be announced	Prayer walk to Crimea
July 14-Aug. 13	Children's camps		
July 28-Aug. 6	Vacation Bible School		

For more information on partnership mission opportunities, contact Paul Harrell, director of the MBCB Partnership Missions Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 292-2398, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651. E-mail: pharrell@mbcb.org



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# The importance of discipleship

**W**ho forgets history is doomed to repeat it. — attributed to George Santayana (1863-1952), American philosopher, educator, and essayist.

It seemed like a good story idea to go along with the news coverage of Veterans Day observances on Nov. 11. Microphone in hand and videographer in tow, the young television reporter decided to conduct a few "man on the street" quizzes in order to find out how much the average citizen knows about the sacrifices made over the years by American veterans.

The results were astonishing. Answers to the question, "Who attacked Pearl Harbor?" included "China," and "I don't have any idea," — the most prevalent answer. Most could not even associate the pivotal 1941 event with the specific war into which the country was propelled.

Struggling for an even simpler historical question on which to base his story, the reporter asked, "Who is the father of our country?" Americans know enough to know who is considered the father of their country, right?

What the reporter got in return to that question were a host of blank stares and a few wild guesses (all wrong) usually followed by giggles.

The reporter apparently began to realize he was on to something, so he pressed, "What is the beginning portion of the Constitution called?" One interviewee answered, "The Declaration of Independence," and most of the others shook their heads in befuddlement.

While the possibility remains that the reporter snipped together the most outrageous clips in order to make an interesting report, it is profoundly troubling that anyone failed to correctly answer three of the most basic questions in American history.

Even more troubling was the observation that as the age of the interviewees grew younger, so did their ignorance of our history. How can the leaders of tomorrow avoid the pitfalls of the past, if they don't have an fundamental understanding of what has gone before? How can we discern where we're going, if we don't know from

whence we came? On what can we base our future, if not the hard-learned lessons of our ancestors?

Then the thought occurred to me: Are we as dangerously ignorant of our Christian heritage as we are our American heritage? I was afraid I already knew the answer, but I decided to see for myself.

The shopping mall on that Saturday morning was a treasure trove of diversity — people of all shapes, sizes, and colors. It wasn't hard to strike up a conversation with many of them.

"What is the 'Greatest Commandment' and who made it?" I asked. Puzzlement was the response from most people. "What about the Great Commission?" I continued. There were few correct answers.

Concerned that my questions may have been too theological, I decided to ease up a little bit. "Who was Noah?" I asked.

Surely everyone would know the answer to this cream puff, I reasoned, seeing as how the mini-series (however inaccurate) was just broadcast on network television.

More than a few people missed, including the college student who asked, "What's his last name?"

If there was any reassurance to be found in this decidedly unreassuring exercise, it was that most of the correct answers came from people who professed to be Baptists.

Even among Baptists, however, there was a disconcertingly high proportion of wrong answers or no answers at all.

Somewhere in the process, we are failing in our responsibilities to make Americans

**"OUR CHURCH IS GRAPPLING WITH THE GREAT ISSUES OF THE DAY — MORALITY IN LEADERSHIP, SANCTITY OF LIFE, AND WHERE TO PUT THE ANNOUNCEMENTS IN THE ORDER OF WORSHIP."**



into citizens and — more importantly — to mold lost people into disciples of Christ.

Of course it is important to bring people to the baptismal pool, but it is also important to help new believers grasp the magnificence of their inheritance and show them how to walk every day with the Savior. That takes time and effort, and that's what discipleship is all about.

Get involved right away in your church's discipleship program. Help new believers (and the "old" ones, too) understand that every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before.

The importance of doing so cannot be overstated. Time is ticking away.

Who forgets history...

**C**ast thy burden on the Lord,  
and he shall sustain thee.  
(Ps. 52)

This is too heavy for me. I wish someone would come to help. This looks like a good place to lay it. I'll just put it over here. Really. No one needs to see this burden. That is a good place. I hate to know what others would think if they knew I carried this around with me. I have wanted to discard it many times. I really have tried but somehow it creeps back into my life. Once I wrote it on a sheet of paper and burned it. Finished. Over. Done. Wrong! It reappeared bigger than ever. Now, the burden was even more depressing, because I knew I could not rid myself of it, and heavier, because I had carried it longer.

I have stood with others to testify that God can help us in every situation. The reality was that even though I knew it was biblical, I could not find a way to do it practically. In other words, I could tell others what

## GUEST OPINION:



*Lord, where can  
I lay this burden?*

By Jerry Mixon, pastor  
Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale

to do with their burdens but I could not handle my own.

Other preachers told me to give it to God. Well, I did but it seemed that God did not want it either. (Yes, I know better, but that is the way it seemed.)

I remember once on a retreat all of us nailed our burdens to a little wooden cross. The cross was then placed in a large fire and the leader said, "God burned up our sins and burdens." That was good news to me. Surely, I thought this will do it. However, later that night just before I closed my eyes in sleep, Mr. Burden walked back into my mind and I sunk beneath the

weight. I was like a man with billows of sea waves crashing over me. The sky was lowering and I was crushed beneath the foamy sea of despair.

I often felt like the man who tried to throw his old boomerang away. Each time he tried, it came back.

One day as I was standing alone beneath this black lowering sky, breaking beneath this burden, I realized God was not going to remove the burden and I was unable to lay it down. There was only one thing left to do: I was give out so I might as well give up!

I cried out to God, "I give up.

I can't bear this. I give myself to you." Do you know what happened? Lightning? Thunder? Wonderful feelings? Wrong — nothing happened!

Have you ever felt like that? Relax. You are in good company. Most of us have at one time or another walked this same road. I want to offer you hope as I conclude.

The burden did not go away. It was still there. Pressing. Demanding. Hurting. Hindering. Even growing. Then somewhere along my journey, I realized even though the burden was still there, the bitterness was gone. The scars were present but the hurt disappeared. The memory was present but the grief was gone. The weight was there but the heaviness vanished.

Somehow, sometime, in his own time and his own way, Jesus had slipped beneath the burden and lifted the weight.

Mixon is president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.



# LifeWay mission trip yields 15,082 converts

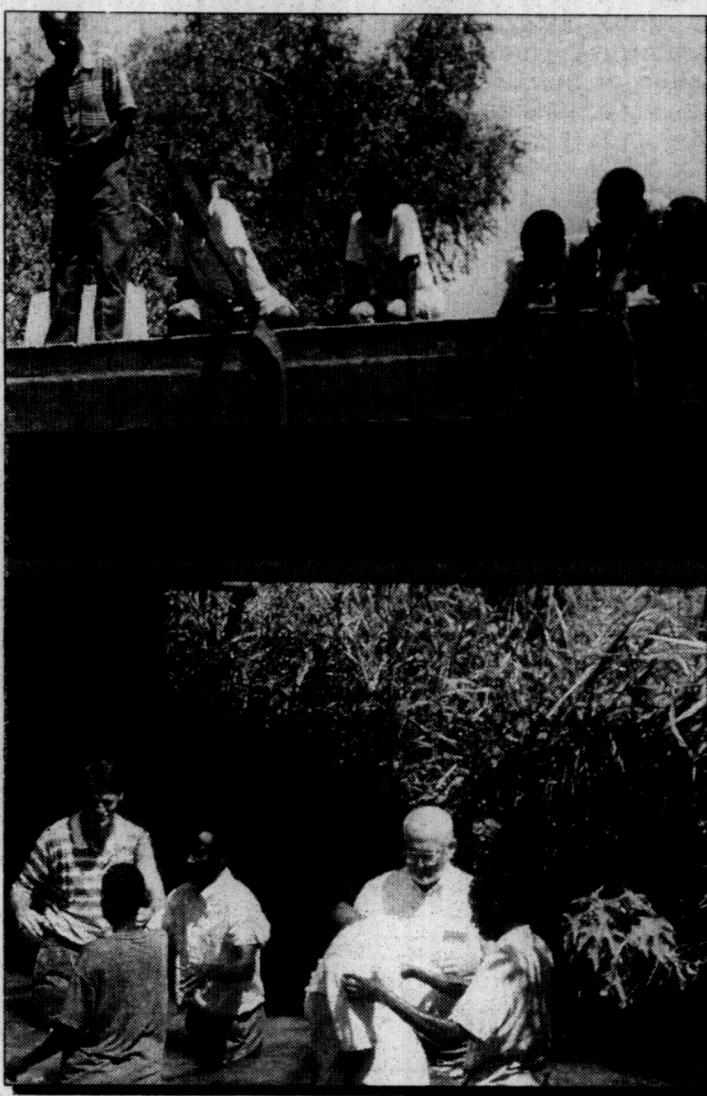
NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — In the third annual mission trip to Kenya sponsored by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, 15,082 persons made professions of faith and 46 churches were started.

A total of 86 LifeWay employees, spouses, teenagers, retirees, and 26 others from 10 churches made up the mission team which traveled in three waves in October. A six-person teaching team left Oct. 1, spent several days leading conferences for pastors and church leaders and then joined 35 people making up the first evangelistic team who left Oct. 6, returning Oct. 19. The second evangelistic team of 39 left Nashville Oct. 18, returning on Oct. 31.

For the third consecutive year, LifeWay missionaries shared their faith in the Busia region of western Kenya near Lake Victoria, an area that had been largely unevangelized prior to 1997.

"God has used our LifeWay missionaries in mighty ways," Jim Carter, coordinator of the project and vice president of LifeWay's finance and business services division, said. "His spirit was evident in the life of each person who went. The prayer support of those who stayed behind was obvious."

Scott Jordan, pastor of First



**NEW BELIEVERS** — Tom McCoy (left) and Jerry Waters (second from right) of the Tennessee Baptist Children's Home in Nashville, baptize Kenyans who recently accepted Christ. Adults and children look on from the bridge above. (BP photo by Mike Yarber)

Church, Gunter, Texas, went on the 1999 trip after a couple from his church participated in 1998. Jordan, who personally led 125 persons to faith in Christ, said

the highlight of the trip was "to see the joy and boldness of the Kenyan Christians."

Jim Shull, director of LifeWay's corporate services department, said he realized "I waited too long to take my first mission trip." He saw firsthand that "the Kenyan Baptists are doing so much with so little and we are doing so little with so much."

Sharon Roberts, of the Sunday School FAITH ministry department, said she benefited in her first international mission trip by "being stretched, and for God to do the stretching. The trip was not easy but it was extremely rewarding." Also, she said after gaining confidence in sharing her faith in Kenya she recognizes "the challenge is

to do the same with people I will see again and who may be less responsive than the Kenyans."

In an article in the LifeWay employee newsletter, LifeLines, J.J. Goldman, church stewardship services section, described being stopped by a man in a village marketplace who had seen her hurrying by and asked if she had time to tell him about Jesus.

"I wish you could have seen the light in his tired brown eyes as he acknowledged faith in Christ," Goldman wrote. "I left him in tears, promising that we would meet again in heaven."

Concluding her account, she wrote: "In faith, I picked

my way through cornfields with only my interpreter in view. I walked up hills, through a stream and from hut to hut. I clapped my hands in worship until they hurt and find myself even now humming their sweet choruses. I watched with amazement as the Holy Spirit worked in ways too marvelous for human eyes to see and understand. And I am the richer for it."

In the three years of LifeWay mission trips to Kenya, 22,319 people have made professions of faith and 77 churches have been started. Plans are now in process to start a Bible school in the Busia area to train pastors to serve many of the new churches.

Carter said one purpose of the mission trips, in addition to



**THE SECOND FRONT PAGE**

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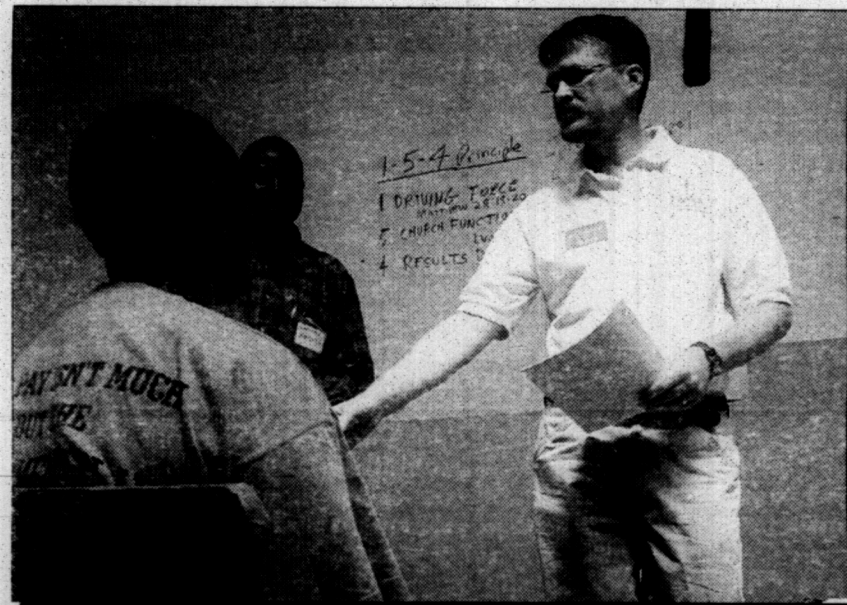
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leading people to accept Christ as their Savior, is to increase employee awareness of mission needs and opportunities.

"You can't go on a mission trip and come back the same," Carter said. "I'm proud of our employees. They could not have done a better job."



**DISCIPLING** — Mike Livingstone (right), Adult Sunday School Ministry Department, teaches Kenyans the "1-5-4 Principle." Livingstone went to Kenya with the first group of LifeWay employees the first two weeks of October. (BP photo by Mike Yarber)

### Looking back

#### 10 years ago

Eddie Hamilton, pastor of Oak Forest Church, Jackson, is elected president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention during the annual meeting in Jackson. Hamilton, 42, is elected in a runoff ballot with Larry Otis, a Tupelo businessman.

#### 20 years ago

Shiloh Church, Winston Association, begins construction on a new sanctuary, made necessary by the rapid growth of the church. Since 1971, Sunday School attendance has gone from 35 to 142. Men of the church are donating their labor. Auzie Smith is pastor.

#### 50 years ago

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly votes 45-0 that effective Jan. 1, 1950 all sessions of the General Assembly will open with one minute of silent prayer. It is the first official recognition of the world's religions in UN proceedings.

## Global Priority Churches at 500

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — The count is in, and 500 of Southern Baptists' more than 40,000 churches across the country have officially become Global Priority Churches. The Global Priority Church (GPC) network, launched by the International Mission Board (IMB) in 1998, encourages churches to develop God's heart for the nations and step up global outreach ministries.

"We've recognized through the years that we needed some way to recognize and affirm churches that are serious about missions and want to become better equipped and personally involved. In the past few years, we've seen a great increase in churches wanting to personalize missions — to know missionaries by name, to pray for them, to adopt them, to have missions emphases, and events," said Bill Morgan, who directs the Global Priority Church emphasis.

A Global Priority Church meets (or is in the process of meeting) the following eight criteria:

- ◆ Prioritizes missions as a major thrust and provides staff leadership.
- ◆ Prays for missionaries and the unreached world.
- ◆ Provides missions education, information, events, and displays.
- ◆ Promotes growing missions giving.
- ◆ Produces the missionaries for now and tomorrow.
- ◆ Participates in short-term missions projects.
- ◆ Partners in missions by adopting unreached people groups.
- ◆ Personalizes missions by adopting IMB personnel.

The board will work with GPC churches to tap into the missions resources available and maximize their potential for God's kingdom. Each church will receive a plaque, hand-signed and, when possible, presented to the church by IMB personnel in a worship service.

The good news? With 500 churches committing to the GPC network, that's a little over one percent of total SBC churches.



# Texas Baptists affirm '63 version of BF&M

EL PASO, Texas (BP) — A motion placed before the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) to affirm the 1963 Southern Baptist Convention statement of beliefs — not the 1998 revision which adds a section on marriage and family — was passed during the BGCT annual meeting's Nov. 9 morning session.

The Texas action came in the form of a motion submitted by Bob Newell, pastor of Houston's Memorial Drive Church, that the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message (BF&M) statement be affirmed as a "unifying statement of our common faith and practice." It also stipulated that the BGCT "distribute this statement to every BGCT-related church, encouraging its teaching and noting that it was affirmed by the messengers at this convention."

The motion was passed on raised-hand-type vote with only a smattering of opposition, a convention spokesman reported. It

was dealt with in about 15 minutes, with an effort to amend the motion, to substitute an affirmation of the 1998 SBC revision, failing by a similar lopsided majority.

While the motion made no specific reference to the SBC's addition of a section on marriage and family in 1998, key BGCT leaders publicly stated that the affirmation of the 1963 Baptist Family and Message amounted to a stance against the SBC's 1998 revision.

Clyde Glazener, a Fort Worth pastor who was elected president of the 2.7-million-member BGCT Nov. 8, "led the charge against the [SBC] amendment," according to a national Associated Press news story.

"That amendment, though it spoke about family and had some decent things in it, also had in it some barbs that were intended to hammer women about subservience, in my judgment," Glazener was quoted as saying. Glazener, 64, is pastor of Gambrell Street Church,

across the street from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth.

Glazener was quoted by the Fort Worth Star-Telegram as describing the SBC's 1998 marriage and family addition to the Baptist Faith and Message as "Neanderthal."

"We need to endorse the 1963 statement because it does not include barbs about women being subservient," he told the Fort Worth paper.

According to the Star-Telegram, Glazener told reporters that conservatives who pushed for the 1998 marriage and family section are using the Baptist Faith and Message not as a guideline but as a creed to try to get everyone to conform to their views.

"They are trying to hold people's feet to the fire and walk lock-step with them," Glazener said.

Glazener was quoted by the Austin American-Statesman as saying it is a "hopeless task" to think that the BGCT and the SBC's "fundamentalists" can reconcile their differences.

Paige Patterson, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and a Texas native, said after the Nov. 9 vote, "I am grateful that the BGCT leadership has made crystal clear for the sake of Texas Baptist churches where they stand on family and church issues. Now it is up to the churches to decide with whom they agree — with a liberal, culturally acceptable view of family and church, or with a Christ-honoring, Bible-believing perspective."

"I have every confidence that the majority of Texas Baptist churches will go with Christ and with the clear instruction of the Bible," said Patterson, president of Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., and former president of Criswell College in Dallas.

Richard Land, president of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said in a statement issued after the BGCT vote, "From the beginning, critics of the family article have looked with a jaundiced eye solely at that line which urges wives to submit to their own husbands, as to the Lord, and overlooked the completeness of the article and the entire Ephesian passage [chapter 5 in the New Testament book], which address the distinct, but equally valuable roles of the husband and wife in the marriage relationship."

Land, a Texas native and former staff member at First Church in Dallas, was on the seven-member committee which drafted the SBC marriage and family article.

Saying he is "delighted" that the BGCT has voted to affirm the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message, Land noted, "The first article of this statement defines the Bible as having 'truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter,' which Herschel Hobbs, the chairman of the statement's drafting committee, said never meant anything but inerrancy."

"I find it curious that the BGCT, while affirming the inerrancy and full authority of Scripture, would question the Baptist Faith and Message's article on the family which was passed overwhelmingly by the 1998 Southern Baptist Convention and which is little more than a paraphrase of the Apostle Paul's teaching," Land continued. "After all, it is the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesian church who instructs husbands to love their wives as Christ loves the church and gave himself for it, and likewise for wives to submit to their husbands as unto the Lord."

## Tribute to a leader



Sybil Davis (left) of Hattiesburg receives a letter of tribute to her late husband, Mackie Davis, from Paul Harrell, director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Partnership Missions Department, at the Partnership Missions Celebration banquet Nov. 12 at First Church, Jackson. Davis, a key lay leader in partnership missions in Mississippi, died in August of this year. (Photo by Carl M. White)

## New Mexico Baptists set to study fellowship test

LAS CRUCES, N.M. (ABP) — The Baptist Convention of New Mexico has directed its executive board to study language requiring that local churches must affirm the recently amended "Baptist Faith and Message" in order to be in good standing.

That came after the state convention approved new articles of incorporation and bylaws that no longer mandate a church be part of a local association in order to be recognized by the state group.

Former convention president Dean Mathis, pastor of Taylor Memorial Church in Hobbs, N.M., said the change would weaken the role of associations, which in the past have enforced doctrinal integrity of churches, thus sparing the state convention from debating theology.

Mathis proposed an amendment to the new articles of incorporation and bylaws — which govern the state convention, a children's home, a foundation, and two camps — to require that messengers to the annual meeting be "from Baptist churches which have been received into and are cooperating with one of the Baptist associations in New Mexico."

Messengers at the Oct. 26-27 state convention at First Church in Las Cruces rejected Mathis' amendment 172-90, however, and then voted overwhelmingly to adopt new governing documents proposed by a study committee named last year.

Mack McCarthick, pastor of Hillcrest Church in Lovington, made a motion that a credentials committee use the revised "Baptist Faith and Message" as

criteria to decide whether to seat messengers to the state convention. The motion passed 190-61.

McCarthick returned later in the meeting with another recommendation, that the executive board study amending the just-approved articles and bylaws to specify that future credentials committees also use the "Baptist Faith and Message" doctrinal statement as a guide.

Amy Mathis, a messenger of Sandia Church in Albuquerque, said some New Mexico Baptists disagree with an amendment to the doctrinal statement voted by the Southern Baptist Convention last year.

A new article on the family, the first amendment to the "Baptist Faith and Message" since 1963, declares that wives should submit to their hus-

bands. Mathis warned that churches that disagree with that position would be in danger of being ruled out of fellowship by the state convention.

In other business, the convention passed a resolution urging churches to pray and fast for 80 days for revival.

Another resolution denounced a call by New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson to legalize drugs, calling it a "destructive and immoral position."

A third resolution took exception to a recent move by a state university to drop religion courses from its general curriculum.

The resolution encourages Eastern New Mexico University in Portales "to keep, and expand where possible, the number of religious courses ... as an option for students who wish to take such courses."



# Pocahontas church celebrating 175 years |

POCAHONTAS (Special) — Friends, former members, and current members gathered October 3 to celebrate the 175th anniversary of Pocahontas Church, Metro Association. Located at the corner of Highway 49 and Kickapoo Road, Pocahontas Church lays claim to being the oldest Baptist church in Hinds County, according to member and church historian, Ed Blake.

Blake has been a member of the church longer than any other current member, having joined in 1935. In appreciation for the history of the church, Blake has written the third edition of the church's history.

The church was founded in 1824 by Benjamin and Lucy Hatch Whitfield on the western slope of a red sand and clay outcropping known as Society Ridge. The Whitfields came to Hinds County from outside of Raleigh, North Carolina. With a land grant from the president of the United States, the Whitfields and Hatches cleared land for respective farms and also constructed a church, which was called Union Baptist Church but was sometimes known as Society Ridge Church. Membership consisted of the pioneer families and their slaves.

Committed to education and cooperation among Baptists, Whitfield was a leader in the organization of the Mississippi Baptist Convention and in the acquisition of Mississippi College (MC) in Clinton. He served on the MC board of trustees for 22 years and as its chairman for many years.

The Union Church building was destroyed during the Civil War. Twelve years later, the Whitfields were at the core of raising a new building. The new church was called Mt. Pisgah. In 1902, the church relocated toward Pocahontas, and in 1927 was renamed Pocahontas Baptist Church. The need for space caused the church to relocate again on Kickapoo Road in 1961.

Despite two more fires which gutted the church buildings, the con-



HERITAGE PRESERVED — Sherry (left) and George Whitfield stand before the family monument of Benjamin Whitfield, George's great-great-grandfather. Benjamin Whitfield founded what is now Pocahontas Church in 1824. (BR Special Photo)

gregation has rebuilt and expanded at the intersection of Kickapoo Road and Highway 49 North.

The legacy of the Whitfield family has continued, with Theodore Whitfield serving as pastor from 1934-45, and with George Whitfield, the great-great-grandson of Benjamin Whitfield, delivering the invocation at the recent 175th anniversary celebration.

"Gratitude and inspiration prevailed in the day's activities as the apparently oldest Baptist Church in Hinds County gave thanks for the steadfastness of spirit and accomplishment down through its 175 years of service to the Lord," Blake said. Steve Jordan is pastor.

## Commission urges action against China, Sudan

WASHINGTON (ABP) — The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has urged President Clinton and other White House officials to take action against religious persecution in China and Sudan. The commission made its appeal in an Oct. 19 meeting with Clinton, National Security Advisor Samuel Berger, and White House Chief of Staff John Podesta.

Rabbi David Saperstein, chairman of the commission, said the panel decided to focus initially on three countries — China, Sudan, and Russia. Their report, however, does not call for specific sanctions against Russia at this time.

China and Sudan were among countries recently listed by the U.S. State Department as "countries of particular concern" because of severe violations of religious liberty. Others listed were Iran, Iraq, and Myanmar (Burma). Also listed were Taliban and Afghanistan, two governments not recognized by the United States, and Serbia, which is not a country.

The listing was mandated by the International Religious Freedom Act, which also established the commission. The law also requires the president to take action against listed countries within 90 days or notify Congress if no penalty is to be imposed.

The commission urged the president to apply his 1997 executive order imposing economic sanctions on Sudan that bar China Petroleum Corp. and other companies from using U.S. stock exchanges to finance Sudan's new oil pipeline. The commission said that pipeline would insulate Sudan from the impact of economic sanctions and "perpetuate the 16-year-old civil war which has already claimed the lives of 2 million Sudanese."

### PETRIFIED WOOD

For years I have kept in my office a big piece of rock that used to be wood — it is now petrified wood. It was a piece that had been dug out of a riverbed that was being dredged. I got it and kept it as a constant reminder of what can happen to us when we stop growing. The psalmist so beautifully pictures how the saint is supposed to be a tree, growing and flourishing by the riverside, producing fruit, and being a blessing. Yet, sometimes a tree will fall into a marsh or a river, and a process begins to take place in the wood that petrifies it. Like it or not, it is a study in what can happen to any of us.

Petrified wood gets that way when silt deposits begin to permeate the grain and solidifies to the point where a wood fiber becomes hardened like a rock. It retains the look of wood — it has grain and it may have bark — but it is a stony substance. According to scientists, it takes place very slowly over a long period of time, almost unnoticed, and eventually it simply becomes a limb or a log that is worthless except as a reminder of what "was."



## Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

When wood petrifies it retains its shape but does not grow, does not produce, does not reproduce, and does not provide building materials. It is simply dead! As autumn continues its march across our land, we watch the leaves change, die, and fall. We see huge trees that once were vibrant with life but now stand as huge webs that appear to be dead. These trees are not petrified and neither are they really dead. They are simply going through the cycle of life and are dormant for a period.

It is neither unusual, nor abnormal, for saints to have these kinds of periods in their lives also. Simply because they are not full of leaves or fruit does that mean they are dead. In the coldest part of winter you can still break a twig and find

inside that life continues to flow. They will live again and will share their life, goodness, and shade with others, but petrified wood will remain in its shape, only sterile, lifeless, and useless.

It is a disturbing thing to think that a saint or an entire church can become so stiff, so rigid and dead, that they petrify and become useless. In Rev. 3, Jesus addressed the church at Sardis and said to them, "You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead." Apparently Sardis had all the shapes and trappings that go with being a church, but there was no life — no spiritual life — no "Christ-provided" life flowing there. They had petrified and did not know it!

What happens to a church that causes it to be in this condition? Like the tree:

- it stops receiving the nour-

ishment of new life into it;

- it is satisfied just to rest where it is;
- its future is shaped more by external influences than by internal power.

The apostle Paul describes what I believe is one of the internal, motivating factors of his ministry when he says in 1 Cor. that he brought his body into subjection so the time would not come when he would be a "castaway" — something that used to be of worth and usefulness, but now only sits on the shelf as a reminder of past days and productivity.

He did not want to become petrified wood and he knew that the only way to avoid such a plight was to stay in a constant, living relationship with Christ.

Would you pause right now, in a moment of prayer and reflection, and ask the Lord Jesus to flow through you with his life — to use you, revitalize every cell of your being, and keep you growing for his glory?

His Kingdom has not, cannot, and will not be built with petrified wood!

## Ga. church dismissed from association

SAVANNAH, Ga. (BP) — Georgia's Savannah Association, in an historic vote, removed Memorial Church from the fellowship of the association because of its call of a woman as pastor. The issue was whether the church had stepped outside the boundaries of acceptable practice and the majority of messengers voted 181 to 96 that it had.

Carolyn Hale was called as pastor of Memorial in March and came to the church in May. The 40-year-old church in southeast Georgia has over 200 members and has a long history of support for women in ministry. Hale is the daughter of a Southern Baptist pastor, a graduate of Georgetown (Ky.) College and Lexington (Ky.) Seminary. She previously served as Dean of Student Life at Georgetown College and associate pastor of Faith Church in Georgetown.

John Ashworth, associational missionary in Savannah, said the issue had become a divisive one in the association and called it "a distraction that has deterred us from our main function of serving Christ and strengthening churches." But he was optimistic about the association getting beyond this issue, saying, "We are going forward together."

The Savannah Association has 74 affiliated churches.



## JUST FOR THE RECORD



First Church, Flora, note burning

Note burning services for renovation at a cost of \$500,000 were held at First Church, Flora, on Sept. 26. Pictured (from left) are Rickey Blythe, pastor; James Williams; and O. J. Pearce.

### Improve Church, Columbia,

will present its 13th annual "Scenes of Christ," a depiction of the Life and Times of Jesus Christ, 6-8 p.m., on Dec. 4 and 5.



Oakland Church, Walnut, held Acteen's Recognition Service on Oct. 24. Pictured, front row, are Kay Winter, WMU director; Melinda Bates and Belinda Bates, Queens with Scepter; Elizabeth Reed, leader; (back row) Barbara Davis, wife of interim pastor; Deborah Bates, mother of Melinda and Belinda Bates; and Lyndle Davis, interim pastor.

Camp Lakeside located south of Charleston and operated by North Central Association held a ground breaking ceremony for the new gymnasium on Oct. 2. The gymnasium will be a 100 by 80-foot building that will include space for classrooms and a kitchen as well as a full basketball court. The building will be named for the late Lewis Kellum, who was a big influence at the camp during its early years. Savannah Kellum, (pictured) wife of Lewis Kellum, turned over the first shovel of dirt for the new building. Also, on that same day, the camp pavilion was named for James (Smitty) Smith. He was a young man from the Charleston area, who inspired people with his dedication to God even as he struggled with Muscular Dystrophy. For more information about Camp Lakeside, call Ben Kennedy at 647-8878.



Ground breaking at Camp Lakeside



Jones County Association ground breaking

Jones County Association held a groundbreaking ceremony for a new office building on Oct. 31. The 3,800 square foot facility will be constructed on the site of the former office location at 206 South 11th Avenue, Laurel. Participants in the ceremony included (from left) Alan Woodward, moderator of the Association; Richard O'Neal, Trustmark Bank representative; Becky Loper, building committee member; Allan Nix, director of missions; Mary Jo Wedgeworth, building committee member; John Sumner, trustee representative; and Frances Myrick, building committee member.

Unity Church, West, will host its annual Harvest Festival, Nov. 20, beginning at 6

p.m. with supper. Gene Richardson will bring a devotional at 7 p.m., following will be a singing featuring the group Proclamation of Kosciusko. For more information, call Mary Hudson at (601) 289-1980.

The Mississippi chapter of the New Orleans Seminary Alumni Association met October 26 at Galloway United Methodist Church in Jackson. Seminary President Chuck Kelley Jr. (left) spoke at the meeting. Officers of the state chapter include (from left after Kelley) John Sumner, retired Baptist Student Union director at Jones County Junior College in Ellisville, immediate past president;



Mississippi chapter officers, NOBTS Alumni Association

## REVIVAL DATES

**Union, Brandon:** Nov. 19-21; Fri. and Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m.; Donnie Guy, evangelist; Brent Bozeman, pastor.

**Pleasant Grove, Shannon:** Nov. 28-Dec. 1; 6:30-7 p.m., special music by Ray Walker; 7 p.m., preaching by Harvey Reeves, evangelist; Joe Holcomb, pastor.

**Mt. Olive (Carroll):** Nov. 28-Dec. 1; Sunday, 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; David Miller, guest speaker.

**Raymond Road, Jackson:** Nov. 28-Dec. 8; preaching,

music, and special activities by Life Action Crusade; Sunday services, 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.; nightly services, 7-9 p.m.

**Jericho, Baldwin:** Nov. 21; 10 a.m.; Glen Reeder, guest speaker; covered dish fellowship meal following service and music by Friends Again.

**Line Creek, Morton:** Nov. 21; 160 years; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; lunch following service in fellowship hall; cemetery meeting, 1 p.m.;

Leroy Brewer, pastor of First Church, Fannin, secretary/treasurer; Ben Jones, pastor of Crowder Church, Crowder, president; and Lowell Ingram, pastor of Cato Church, Cato, vice president.

## HOMEcomings

Jerry Holmes, Morton, guest speaker; Tim Johnson, music; Scott Walters, pastor.

**Topeka (Lawrence):** Nov. 21; Darnell Archie, former pastor, morning message; lunch will be served; singing in the afternoon with Mary Cox McCain and New Wine from Newhebron; Dale Authement, pastor.

## STAFF CHANGES

**Twin Lakes Church, Madison,** has called **Hugh Smith** as pastor, effective Nov.

21. He has been the minister of education and outreach and associate pastor of First Church, Gautier, since 1990, and minister of youth and education at North Greenwood Church for several years. Smith, a native of Yazoo City, is a graduate of Mississippi College and New Orleans



Smith

Seminary. Billy Stanford, former pastor of Twin Lakes Church, retired last year.

**Ridgeway Church, Vicksburg,** has called **Tony Beazley** as pastor effective Oct. 31. A native of Crystal Springs, Beazley is a graduate of Hinds Community College and Mississippi College. He is currently attending New Orleans Seminary and plans to graduate in December.

**Puckett Church, Puckett,** has called **Grant McElveen** as pastor effective Sept. 26. A native of Bogalusa, La., McElveen received his educa-

tion at Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary.

**Twin Lakes Church, Walls,** has called **Willard Crawley** as pastor. He is a graduate of Blue Mountain College and New Orleans Seminary, and is presently working on his doctorate from Luther Rice Seminary. Crawley previously served at Courtland Church, Courtland.



Crawley



## NAMES IN THE NEWS



Everett and Kelly

Pine Hill Church, Enterprise, recognized Lillian K. Everett Oct. 17 on her 94th birthday for her hard work, dedication, and love she has given for over 70 years. Gary Kelly is pastor.

Inc. is now offering the Natural Church Development Survey, an instrument designed and proven with the research of over 1,000 churches in 32 countries on all six continents. Posey

Tim Posey, director of Freedom Ministries International, Inc., Brookhaven, recently attended and completed training offered by ChurchSmart Resources, Inc., of Carol Stream, Ill. He is now a trained consultant in the process and procedures of Natural Church Development. Freedom Ministries International,

is also secretary/treasurer of the Conference of Mississippi Baptist Evangelists. For more information, call (888) 939-3277.



Jonathan Mitchell achieved perfect attendance in Sunday School for the 1998-99 church year at Pine Grove Church, Picayune. For his accomplishment the church gave him a pin, certificate, and a Bible. Pictured (front row) is Jonathan Mitchell; (back row)



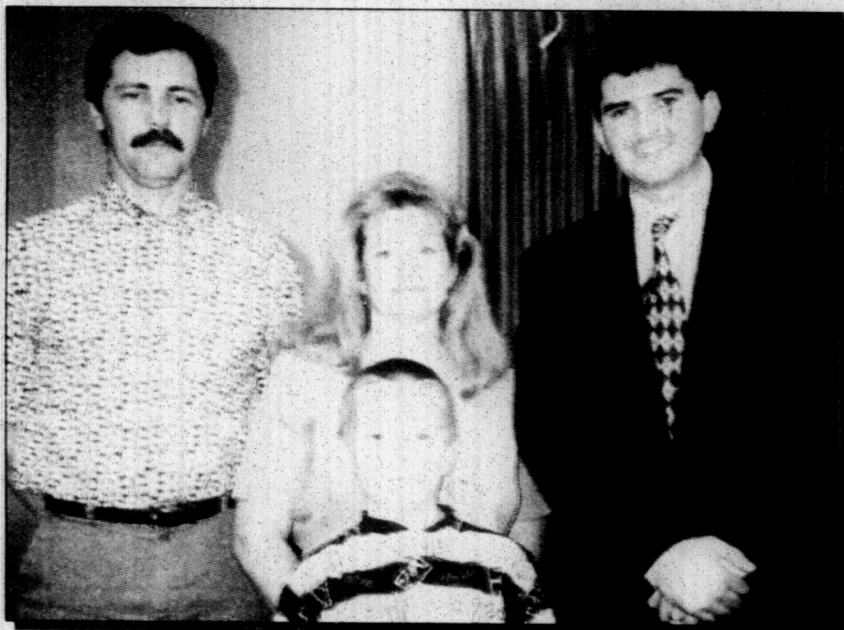
Stan Mitchell (his father); Sheila Mitchell (his mother); and Scott Cappleman, pastor.

County Line Church, Neshoba Association, ordained Terry Rainer to the deacon fellowship on Sept. 19. Pictured (from left) are Barron Pilgrim, pastor; Rainer; and Dub Rainer, chairman of deacons.

Bud Shiers and Gillis McMahon were ordained as deacons on Sept. 12 by Wayside Church, Vicksburg. Pictured (from left) are Shiers; Larry W. Haggard, pastor; and McMahon.



Deacons of Wayside Church, Vicksburg



The Mitchells and Cappleman

Dear Mississippi Baptists, Attached you will find a photograph that was taken at the Annual Strategy and Fellowship Meeting for the International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries that serve in the southern half of the country of Brazil.

This year, our meeting was held in Pirenópolis, Goiás, and our speakers were Ralph Neighbor, author of The Survival Kit, and Bill Elliff, pastor of Summit Church, Little Rock, Ark.

As always, it was wonderful to reunite with missionary families, many of whom we only see once per year. The meeting, however, will likely be remembered, not for the great food or fellowship, but for the dramatic movement of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

Through his teaching of the Cell-Church methodology, Ralph Neighbor challenged all of us to evaluate the level of impact we are making in the regions where we serve.

Then in an incredible way, God used the down-to-earth preaching of Bill Elliff to make each of us evaluate the impact our relationship with God is having on our daily walk.

Through these two men, God fanned the flames of evangelism, church planting, and personal revival in a way that is seldom seen.

Mississippi Baptists, thank you for



supporting us, your missionary family here in Brazil, and others around the world. As you read this article, if God is speaking to you about a call to missions, or if you are interested in your church participating in a volunteer mission project, please don't let "the feeling pass." Act now, and let God use you to impact the world through the plans he has already made for those who are obedient to him.

You can contact the IMB at 1-800-999-3113 or 1-800-866-3621, or visit the IMB homepage at [www.IMB.org](http://www.IMB.org), or the Eastern South American homepage at [www.IMBESA.org](http://www.IMBESA.org).

In the love of Jesus,  
Larry and Alicia Braswell  
[6braswells@pobox.com](mailto:6braswells@pobox.com)

Pictured (front row, from left) are: David Lambach (age 9), Wray Braswell (age 10), Larry Braswell, Andrew Braswell (age 7), Alicia Braswell, Lucas Braswell (age 2), David Vaughn (age 6), and Caitlyn Braswell (age 5).

Second row: Rachel Lambach (age 3), Paul Lambach, Hannah Lambach (age 8 mos.), Elaine Lambach, Danny Rollins, LeAnn Rollins, Karen Gray, Tony Gray, Beth Parker, Ronnie Parker.

Third row: Shari Holley, Laurie Bledsoe, Bonnie Hearon, Tom Hearon, Dott Lott, Ronnie Erwin, Bob Erwin.

Fourth row: David Bledsoe, Laurie Dunaway, Larry Murphy (Arkansas sitting), Kathy Vaughn, John Vaughn.

Places of service:

- ◆ Lambach family – Goiânia, Goiás
- ◆ Braswell family – Chapecó, Santa Catarina
- ◆ Vaughn family – Caxias do Sul, Rio Grande do Sul
- ◆ Rollins family – São Paulo, São Paulo
- ◆ Gray family – Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro
- ◆ Parker family – Brasília, Distrito Federal
- ◆ Holley family – in Cascavel, Paraná
- ◆ Bledsoe family – Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais
- ◆ Hearon family – Niterói, Rio de Janeiro
- ◆ Dott Lott, Goiânia – Goiás (soon to retire after 30 years of missionary service)
- ◆ Erwin family – Inúbia Paulista, São Paulo
- ◆ Dunaway family – Brasília, Distrito Federal
- ◆ Murphy family – Anápolis, Goiás

Jesus Christ

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Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.  
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.  
(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.  
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.  
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



## NAMES IN THE NEWS



**First Church, Coldwater**, held a Deacon Ordination Service on Oct. 31. Pictured (from left) are D. Elkins, Jack Geiger, Stephen Ogg, Earl Forbess, and Earl Weddle. Bob Maddux is pastor.



**Deacons of East Fork Church, Liberty**

**Deacon Ordination** Church, Liberty, Oct. 17. Services was held at East Fork. Pictured (from left) are W. E.

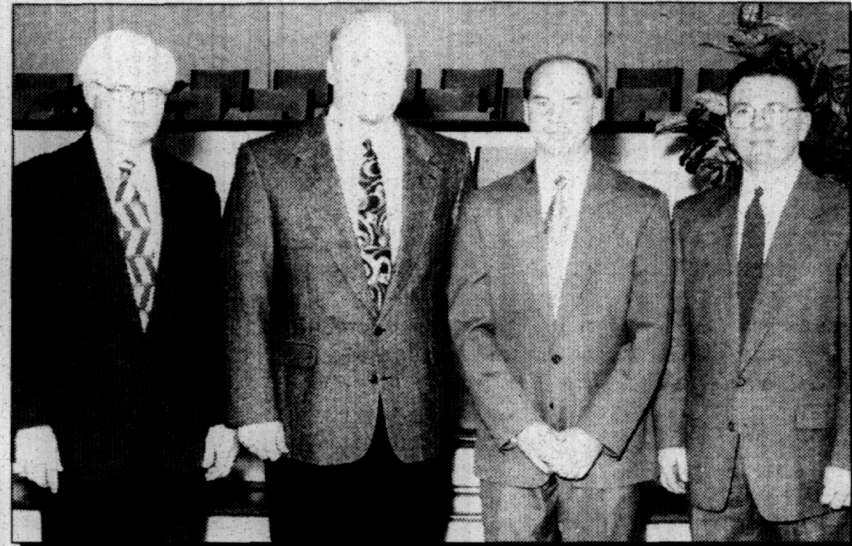
Corkern, interim pastor; Tim Wilkinson, Chris Bryan, Robbie Barron, Terry Simmons, and Bud Newman, newly ordained deacons.



**Duvall and Rushing**

**Charles Rushing** was ordained as deacon during Deacon Ordination Services at Grace Church, Philadelphia, Sept. 19. Pictured (from left) are Dennis Duvall, pastor, and Rushing.

**First Church, Amory**, Simpson is pastor. Pictured (from left) are Bert Mize, chairman of deacons; Dickerson; Allen Knox; and Simpson.



**Deacons of First Church, Amory**



**Richmond Church, Tupelo**, held a special day of recognition and appreciation for Maxine Williams on Oct. 17. She was presented a plaque from the church in honor of her years and service as choir director. Pictured (from left) are her husband Bennie, Williams, and Sean K. Tutor Sr., pastor.

## BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

The Music Department of Mississippi College will present The Mississippi College Chorale, under the direction of James M. Meaders, in its Christmas Concert, Nov. 30 at 7:30 p.m. in Provine Chapel. For more information, call (601) 925-3440.

The Mississippi College Chamber Choir has been chosen, for the second time, to perform for the Regional Convention of the American Choral Directors Association. They will perform at the Bob Carr Performing Arts Center in

Orlando, Fla., on March 3, 2000. Conductor of the Chamber Choir is James Richard Joiner, professor of music and chair of the Music Department. The choir was also chosen for this honor in 1996.

### Michael's Watch



*But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." - Jude 1:9*

**Michael's Watch** is a support group whose sole purpose and mission is to offer emotional, mental, and spiritual support for those whose lives have been affected by family members or loved ones involved in the homosexual lifestyle.

**Michael's Watch Group** meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday each month at First Baptist Church in Louisville, Mississippi from 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Additional information may be obtained by calling **First Baptist Church in Louisville, Mississippi** at (662) 773-6246.

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## THANKS, MISS. BAPTISTS

Editor:

As Thanksgiving is fast approaching, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the faithful Mississippi Baptists who have unknowingly contributed to my faith, life, and ministry.

I would like to thank the faithful Mississippi Baptists who founded and supported Mississippi College (MC). If they had not, my father would have been forced to seek ministerial training somewhere else and my parents may have never met as MC students in 1959.

I would like to thank the individuals who helped establish the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center. My brother and I were born there in 1963 and 1964, respectively. I would like to thank the faithful children's teachers in the churches my father served, for planting spiritual seeds in my heart that led me to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

I would like to thank all those involved in establishing Central Hills Baptist Retreat (CHBR) where I served on staff during the summers of 1980-81 and 1983-86. In the summer of 1983 during a campfire service at CHBR, I surrendered to full-time Christian service.

I would like to thank the individuals who established William Carey College and the professors who taught me with Christian compassion. I would like to thank the Mississippi Baptist Foundation for providing financial assistance during my seminary training in New Orleans.

Yes, I thank Mississippi Baptists for allowing God to use them in investing in my

ministry. While God ultimately receives the praise, I will never forget Mississippi Baptists. Happy Thanksgiving, Philip Price, chaplain Mercy Medical Center Daphne, Ala.

## ASKING FOR FIGHT

Editor:

I suppose you were asking for a fight with your associate's latest editorial, "Who's Afraid of Halloween?" Allow me to shed light on a dark October 31!

God's word goes into detail describing the devil and his tactics. He is a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. In the Bible his appetite consists mainly of sheep! He is subtle and God's Word cautions us as to the wiles of the devil.

You say, "We Christians hide behind our stained-glassed windows and yield the day to evil." Half of that statement is true; the other half is false. I'd rather be hiding behind my window singing "Jesus loves me, this I know," with my children than to be in the parade line of that cardboard (witch) caricature. God's word teaches that believers who are "dressed and in their right minds" will yield the day to Jesus!

Let's do get real! The spirit world behind that caricature is more real than the physical world we live in right now. I'm calling on you to recant your editorial and apologize to the Baptist folks in Mississippi who are hiding behind their stained windows forbidding to yield to your parade behind that cardboard caricature.

You're throwing us rabbit

punches and kidney shots with editorials like October 28. If you're gonna fire off editorials, don't fire off "duds!" Man, "lock and load" and give us something we can use to absorb the fiery darts of the devil.

David A. Crowe, pastor Siloam Church, Meadville

## STAND WITH GENESIS

Editor:

The Nov. 4 issue contained a letter stating that "young earth creationists" were all wet because all of our claims had been disproven and there were several examples that prove evolution. This is not true.

If whales with legs ever existed (I think I would have read about those in my extensive studies on evolution if they ever did, though), they were just one more of God's infinite variety of creatures, not a "transitional form."

The writer's other "proof" of evolution, the supposed "evolution" of insects and bacteria to become immune to insecticides and antibiotics, is absolutely false. When a creature which does not already have an immunity to a deadly substance is subjected to it, it doesn't "evolve" an immunity. It dies. What has happened is not the evolution of immunity, but simply a change in the ratios of resistant to non-resistant individuals — natural selection, but not evolution. Natural selection explains why some individuals survive, not how they arrived.

As to the young earth, how would the writer explain the evidence of the shrinking sun? The sun is burning up its mass at a rate of 1% every 1,000 years, which means 100,000 years ago it would have been

twice its present size, and life could not have existed on earth under those conditions.

The book of Genesis contains at least seven contradictions between the order of creation and the supposed order in which things "evolved." I will stand, on the scientific evidence, with Genesis.

J. C. Brady  
Port Gibson

## REVIEW ARTICLE VI

Editor:

It was with great joy I read that a blue-ribbon committee has been assigned the task of reviewing the Baptist Faith and Message.

May I suggest that they take a look at Article VI where it says the church is an autonomous body, because this is simply not true for many Southern Baptist churches.

Many Southern Baptist churches, even those who are debt-free and cooperating with their association, are not autonomous bodies because of a reversionary clause in their deed.

This clause says that if the church does not abide with the association or convention as the association thinks they should, then the property reverts to the association.

If you have property that you can not sell, trade, make a loan against for a building program, or use as you deem necessary (within the law) without someone else's permission, then you do not truly own it.

To say one thing, as in the Baptist Faith and Message, and then do otherwise, is being a hypocrite, and I do know what Jesus thought of hypocrites.

Howard Crocker  
Long Beach



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

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**INTERSTATE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION** is reopening its request for resumes for the position of executive director. Mail resumes to: Attention Search Committee, Interstate Baptist Association, P.O. Box 19960, Portland, Oregon, 97280-0960.

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Special emphasis in the Nov. 25 issue of

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# LIFE AND WORK

## Obeying God

Jonah 3:1-10

By Tom Atwood

Will you go? Your response may be, "But, Lord, I gave to the missions offering so someone else could go!"

That is not the question that God is asking. The question is: "Will you go?" Many will respond to the call of God with feelings of inadequacy for the task or intimidation by the enormity of the need.

Remember, God does not need your ability but rather your availability. God works extraordinary things through ordinary people who are faithfully obedient to his call.

**God gives a second chance (vv. 1-2).** We are always respon-

sible for our stewardship of opportunity and not everyone gets a second opportunity.

"Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time." What great hope! Our God was gracious and gave Jonah a second chance to obey.

A second chance is never guaranteed. It is always dangerous to dismiss God's call or delay an obedient response. God does not have to call a second time, so no one should presume that he will.

However, he often does give a second chance so that no one should despair. As many have experienced, a second chance



Atwood

does not assure one of a call that is identical to the initial one, nor the consequences that might have been experienced.

**God expects obedience (vv. 3-4).** Jonah learned a valuable, if not dramatic, lesson. This time Jonah obeyed God and traveled to Nineveh.

A large city of Assyria, it took Jonah three days to reach all parts of Nineveh on his preaching mission. Jonah 4:11 suggests a total population of about 600,000 (Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. 2, p. 1208).

No doubt there was some degree of regret in the heart of Jonah. Surely, he wondered what would have happened had he obeyed early on. He could have avoided much hardship and difficulty had he obeyed God's first call.

When believers are given a second chance, they dare not

turn away! Today, if there is remorse over rejected and refused opportunity, determine to appropriate a second chance to obey God's call.

**God uses obedient people (vv. 5-10).** "The Ninevites believed God" (v. 5). What a glorious victory for God's kingdom! Jonah's message was received and believed! A spirit of repentance ran through the whole city. "From the greatest to the least, put on a sackcloth," as a sign of their sorrow for their sin.

God sent out his Word to accomplish his purposes. It was powerfully effective. Even the king took off his royal garments and covered himself with sack cloth. In a display of grief over his sin and sorrow for it he sat down in the dust. This is a graphic picture of humiliation and brokenness over sin.

The proclamation, issued by the king, decreed that every man and animal refrain from

eating or drinking. Their fasting declared their intent to repent of their evil ways. It said, "We mean business, we are serious!"

Destruction was averted. When the Ninevites turned to God in sorrow and repentance they were asking God to turn from his fierce anger (v. 9). God is merciful. "When God saw what they did... he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction..." (v. 10).

A particular response is never guaranteed. Our modern Ninevites sometimes turn a deaf ear to the Lord's message and his offer of mercy. Yet many will hear, receive the message of God's grace, and believe in their eternal deliverance.

If I obey God's call, will I always be heard? No! Will I always be accepted? No! Will God always be honored and glorified? Yes!

Atwood is pastor of First Church, Oxford.

# EXPLORE THE BIBLE

## New leader

Numbers 26:1-30:16

By Sylvia Fleming

The Lord told Moses to go up to Abarim, "a mountain chain southeast of the Dead Sea. At the northern end stands Mt. Nebo [on which Mt. Pisgah is located]" (New Ungers Bible Dictionary, 12). On the eastern side of the Jordan River, Moses stood looking westward into the Promised Land. Moses' sin of smiting the rock at Kadesh resulted in his never entering that Land. We might say that in light of the Israelites' perpetual sins, the sin of Moses was very small.

However, Moses' job held such responsibility that more was required of him than of the

other Israelites; so those who hold more responsible positions are to behave more responsibly. Not only was Moses the military leader of the children of Israel, but he also held the position of prophet. In addition to being spokesperson for God, he also served as mediator for the children of Israel. Thus, Moses' position required obedience to God at all times.

Once God told Moses that he would not be able to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land, Moses then said, "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation..." (27:16). At that moment Moses



Fleming

demonstrated his selflessness and his great love for the Israelites, not once asking that he might choose the leader.

Moses was aware that his time on earth was almost over. Consequently, he did not want his people to be left without a competent guide. He simply asked that God set a leader over the children of Israel so they would not be as sheep without a shepherd (27:17b).

What are the characteristics of sheep without a shepherd? According to Mark 6:34, they are such that move Jesus to compassion. They become scattered (1 Kings 22:17) and troubled, going their own way (Zech. 10:2b). Those who are diseased or sick have no one to heal them nor do those with broken bones have anyone to bind them. Those who are either lost or driven away have

no one to search for them. (Ez. 34:4) and they become food for the beasts/predators (34: 5,8). What a perfect picture of mankind without Jesus, for without him all are indeed lost.

Just as the Lord chose Moses to lead, he also chose Moses' successor Joshua because he had the Holy Spirit in him. Those who possess wisdom of the world often think that their knowledge and wisdom are all that are necessary to do a particular job. However, without the indwelling of the Spirit of God, a person is helpless to perform the work of the Lord.

Though Joshua was filled with the Holy Spirit, he was not equal with Moses. Moses had been God's first choice; but because of sin, God in his perfection had to set aside his first choice, thus using a man of lesser quality. How often does God have to set us aside because we have been disobedient to him? How often has God had to totally remove us

from a scene because of our disobedience? Do we know of someone to whom this has happened? As we are reminded in the New Testament, there is "sin unto death" (1 John 5:16). Is that the death of which Miriam, Aaron, and Moses died?

Joshua was a man of God; however, he could only talk to God through the high priest via the Urim and the Thummin, while Moses spoke face to face with God. The power Moses possessed was ultimately divided between Joshua, the military leader, and Eleazar, the high priest, the intercessor.

As Moses performed the ceremony of the "laying on of hands," he symbolically transferred a portion of his own authority to Joshua. In doing so Moses ridded himself of all earthly rank and influence, before going home to be with the Lord.

Fleming is a member of Bond Church, Neshoba Association.

# FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

## Conquering with instruction

Joshua 6:1-5, 15-20

By Jerry L. Smith

Warren Wiersbe tells the story of a pastor who was trying to stop a tavern owner from building near his church. During a court hearing, an attorney for the bar owner said to the pastor, "Reverend, as a shepherd, shouldn't you be out taking care of sheep?" The pastor replied, "Today, I'm fighting the wolf!"

As Christians, we are constantly engaged in spiritual warfare. Each day we battle the world, the flesh, and the devil (Eph. 2:1-3). Many days, we feel surrounded by all three — like the Americans at Gastogne. When General McAuliff found his men flanked on all sides, he assembled his troops and said,

"Men, we are surrounded by the enemy. We have the greatest opportunity presented an army. We can attack in any direction!"

Do you ever feel overwhelmed by the enemy? Consider the words of John Chrysostom, the fourth century preacher and martyr, "You are but a poor soldier of Christ if you think you can overcome without fighting and suppose you can have the crown without the conflict."

**Certain victory (vv. 1-2).** Our state's recent gubernatorial race illustrates there is no such thing as a "sure thing." The political pundits and statewide prognosticators predicted a



Smith

Republican victory. Little did they know that the race would be so close that it would probably have to be decided by the House of Representatives.

Forecasting the future is tricky business. Who would have predicted that Christian golfer Payne Stewart would meet such an untimely death; or that Walter Payton would be struck down in his prime by bile duct cancer?

God is the only one that can predict the future with any certainty. He told the Israelites that they would be victorious at Jericho, not because of their superior numbers, but because he would give them the victory.

Conversely, if we expect to post more wins than losses in the spiritual realm, we must fight in the strength of the Lord. The Christian soldier is guaranteed the victory, because Jesus

has already defeated every spiritual enemy. The Christian fights from victory, not just for victory!

**Clear instructions (vv. 3-5).** By following God's instructions, the Hebrews brought down the walls of Jericho. If we expect to be victorious in the Christian life, we too must follow God's instructions.

Sometimes, God's instruction manual (the Bible) doesn't make sense to us. We wonder how turning the other cheek or praying for our enemies could possibly bring success.

When we follow the seemingly contradictory sayings of Jesus, we are being, what one writer calls, subversive. Eugene Peterson writes in The Contemplative Pastor, "When I am undermining the kingdom of self and establishing the Kingdom of God, I am being subversive."

The purpose of God's unconventional strategy was to prevent the Israelites from elevating mili-

tary acumen over divine power.

**Complete success (vv. 15-16; 20).** I heard a layperson say that his pastor "had more good ideas by lunch than they could possibly implement in a year." Some people are better planners than implementers. They have lots of good ideas but have trouble following through on their plans.

The nation of Israel followed God's plans exactly. Because of this, the walls of Jericho fell and they achieved one of the greatest recorded victories in the Bible.

Have you had many spiritual victories lately? Is the world, flesh, and the devil always coming out on top? If so, then maybe you need to go back and read the instructions. Remember that the word of God is a light unto your path and a lamp unto your feet. It's God's instruction manual for life — and your life is certainly not a "do-it-yourself" project!

Smith is pastor of First Church, Summit.



# THE VILLAGE VIEW



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## Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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# New name slated for Baptist men's work

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — The North American Mission Board (NAMB) has announced a new name and structure for its mission education organization for men, completing the reorganization of ministry and mission education among men in Southern Baptist churches.

The new organization is being called Baptist Men On Mission, with the quarterly curriculum and video package "Missions in Motion" as its primary component.

"It gives men the opportunity to create a unit so that they can become better equipped to live an on-mission lifestyle," said Rob Carr, interim strategist of adult mission education for NAMB.

Also part of the change is the introduction of Baptist Men On Mission Week, planned for Jan. 23-30, 2000, as a replacement

for the annual Baptist Men's Day observance. The weeklong emphasis — involving prayer, learning, worship, and ministry — is "an opportunity for involving men in reaching the lost in their families, their communities, and beyond," Carr said.

The overall emphasis mirrors NAMB's new mission education strategy of helping Southern Baptists become "on-mission" Christians: awakening them to their need of seeing people come to Christ; adjusting their lives to make that personal involvement possible; activating in whatever way God has uniquely equipped them; and advocating the "on mission" lifestyle among others.

"If the intention of Baptist Men On Mission is to help men become skilled at being on mission, then Missions in Motion is the resource piece that will help them develop on-mission principles, help develop strategies for being on mission, and to help them acquire the abilities and skills they will need," Carr said.

Baptist Men On Mission will help men as they become awakened, for instance, to see exactly what is required for them to

become activated in missions. An overseas missions trip, for instance, might be considered too difficult. "Sometimes men will use that as an excuse to say, 'Well, I won't get involved.' They think if you're going to do missions you have to do it 'over there.'"

While the Missions in Motion studies will show men what steps need to be taken for major overseas mission trips, they will also present other opportunities requiring less effort. And as men become involved in smaller commitments, their experience in seeing God working through them often leads them to tackle the more difficult projects, Carr said.

Carr noted that with the myriad resources available for men, Baptist Men On Mission materials can be used as part of a larger emphasis for men — possibly combined with men's ministry resources from Lifeway Christian Resources or Promise Keepers.

"Missions in Motion can also be used as a mission education emphasis within other men's groups that are already formed, but they are looking for an additional element to their meeting time or gathering," he said.



## SBC leaders reiterate commitment to YouthLink

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — With YouthLink 2000 registration appearing to gain momentum with an increase of more than 3,000 between Oct. 29 and Nov. 5, executives of the four sponsoring agencies reaffirmed their commitment to the Dec. 29-31 event slated for seven locations throughout the United States.

The Nov. 5 registration total of 43,763 from 41 states and three foreign countries represents a gain of 3,066 since Oct. 29. Planners also reported a significant increase in phone calls to the site offices and toll-free information number.

YouthLink 2000 will take place in Anaheim, Calif.; Atlanta, Ga.; Denver, Colo.; Houston, Texas; Philadelphia, Pa.; St. Louis, Mo.; and Tampa, Fla.; In addition to activities at each location, the sites will be linked by satellite for special features. Also, there will be live satellite feeds from the Holy Land several times during the conference.

Dean Finley, North American Mission Board (NAMB), and Richard Ross, LifeWay Christian Resources are co-chairing the event which is sponsored by NAMB, LifeWay, International Mission Board (IMB), and Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). More than 1,000 leaders from SBC agencies, state conventions and churches are involved in YouthLink planning.

Registration by site, also as of Nov. 5, was: Anaheim, 3,800; Atlanta, 13,488; Denver, 1,911; Houston, 9,081; Philadelphia, 1,507; St. Louis, 8,903; and Tampa, 5,073.

The four leaders of the sponsoring organizations emphasized the significance of YouthLink 2000 in allowing young people to hear and respond to God's call to ministry and missions and challenging them to a lifestyle of Christian service.

NAMB President Bob Reccord encouraged pastors, youth leaders and parents to help their students attend "this momentous event. I believe God's Spirit is going to move in the lives of thousands of young people, calling out the next generation to be 'on mission' Christians. These three days may prove to be pivotal in reaching North America and the world for Jesus Christ in the next century."

IMB President Jerry Rankin said YouthLink is a time for the next generation of missionaries to "catch the vision" of service.

"God is calling out Southern Baptists in unprecedented numbers for missionary service, from students to senior citizens.

YouthLink is a fantastic opportunity for the next generation of missionaries to catch a vision for being on mission with God in the 21st century. It would be a shame for any church to deprive its young people of participating in this end-of-the-century challenge to missions commitment," Rankin said.

June Whitlow, WMU senior associate executive director, said the agency's commitment to YouthLink 2000 includes providing 13 national staff members in leadership roles at various locations and exhibits to encourage mission support. In addition, many state WMU leaders are involved.

LifeWay President James T. Draper Jr. said he is praying

"that thousands more teenagers and their parents will make plans to attend YouthLink 2000 in the coming weeks. We consider this once-in-a-lifetime event an investment in the future of our denomination and the world. Who can imagine what God can do in the lives of these young people gathered simultaneously to focus their attention on him. Let us all pray that God will do a mighty, life-changing work through YouthLink 2000."

Information about YouthLink 2000 is available by calling 1-888-YOURLINK or visiting the Web site at [www.youthlink2000.org](http://www.youthlink2000.org). To register, call 1(800) 254-2022.

### Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx  
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X ND FYV AJZ JQ NWH-  
NYND, NIZ FYN AJZ JQ  
XENNO, NIZ FYV AJZ JQ  
GNOJW? AJZ XE IJF FYV  
AJZ JQ FYV ZVNZ, WMF  
JQ FYV CXKXIA.

DNFFYVL FLVIFR-FLJ:  
FYXHFR-FLJ

Clue: A = G

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Malachi Two: Nine.



## LifeAnswers

Ron Munbower, Ph.D.  
Minister of Counseling  
First Church, Jackson

*My parents are always fighting. I'm the oldest of three children and it hurts me to see this. I don't know what to say when my younger brother and sister ask me to explain.*

Parents, like children, sometimes do not get along. Think of some of the arguments you and your siblings have had. What were the reasons? Sometimes it's caused by too many things coming at us at one time; other times it is because of lack of sleep or not feeling well. You are not going to be able to stop your parents from fighting. Find a time when things are peaceful and your parents are together, and let them know how the fighting is hurting you and your

siblings. Pray for Jesus to help your parents deal with their difficulties. Look for ways to encourage them when things are going well. Stay involved with others and make sure you have good friends with whom you can laugh and pray, and who will be there when you are lonely and afraid.

*I am age 25 and pregnant. My boyfriend wants to marry me, but I'm not sure that I really love him.*

Some ideas to consider as you contemplate marriage:

◆ Do we have the same goals and values for our lives in a marriage? Are we both going down the same road? What are our goals — profes-

sionally, spiritually, emotionally, financially, as a family, etc.

◆ Do we have fun together? Do we laugh together, play together, and enjoy similar interests and hobbies? Are we more similar than different or can we appreciate each other's differences?

◆ Does he really listen when I talk? Communication is the key to a successful relationship.

These are only beginning points. If you do not love him, ask yourself what love looks like and how to recognize it when you run into it. Pray about these things and seek the Lord's guidance. Talk with your pastor or a Christian counselor about what your next steps should be to get your life in order.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.